

## Appendix P. Educational Materials

### Bear Encounter Brochure



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## Bear Encounters

### Traveling in Bear Country

When you venture into bear country, you must be willing to accept these wild creatures on their own terms. You have chosen to risk the possibility of encountering wild grizzly bears and black bears. Although there are no guarantees of safety, by being perceptive and non-threatening, you can minimize the chances of being involved in a dangerous confrontation with a bear. For your own protection and to keep Denali's bear population healthy and wild, please carefully read and abide by the following guidelines.

- **Stay Alert - Avoid bears**

Bears can be anywhere, even near populated areas or around buildings. Look for footprints and large droppings. Stay alert and watch for movement across the landscape. Try to hike in open areas, either along wide river channels, or in the alpine tundra. This open habitat affords you the opportunity to spot a bear before it sees you. Be aware of wind direction because bears rely heavily on their sense of smell. Stay upwind of thickets so the bear has a chance to smell and hear you. Never approach carcasses; a defensive bear is likely to be in the area. Be especially alert for bears in berry patches. If possible, detour around areas with high concentrations of berries. When you observe a bear, look for others; females often have cubs with them. Female grizzlies aggressively defend their cubs, therefore, never get between a female and her cubs. Be prepared to alter your route if you sight a bear. Never approach a bear or attempt to pressure it to move out of your way. Always give bears the right of way.

- **Make Noise**

When visibility is limited, such as in forested or brushy areas, bears may be difficult to see. A bear may also be less likely to sense a human presence. Make a variety of noises (loud talking works well) to alert bears of your presence. When given the opportunity, a bear will often move out of the way. Whistling is not recommended because a bear may perceive the sound as a prey animal. Sound does not travel well on windy days or near running water. Compensate for these conditions by altering your route and increasing the amount of noise you make.

- **Camping and Food Handling**

In the back-country, cook and store food at least 100 yards (100 meters) downwind from your tent, in an area with good visibility in all directions. Keep an eye out for approaching bears while preparing food. Be prepared to put all food away quickly when a bear is observed. Avoid cooking greasy or odorous foods. Do not sleep in the clothes you wore while cooking. When spending the night in the back-country, always store your food and garbage in a bear resistant food container.

In the roadside campgrounds, all food, beverages, containers, pet food, coolers, and cooking utensils must be stored in a closed, hard-sided vehicle, or in campground food-storage lockers when not in use. Trash must be stored in the same manner as food or deposited in a bear-resistant garbage can. Scrape unwanted food from pots and plates into a bear-resistant garbage can. **Never** leave food, containers, or garbage unattended. Bears are often destroyed when they become persistent in seeking out human food.

- **If You Encounter A Bear**

**Do not run.** Bears can run faster than 30 mph (50 km/h), even faster than Olympic sprinters. Running is likely to elicit a predatory chase response from an otherwise non-aggressive bear. If the bear is unaware of you, detour away from it. Give the bear plenty of room, allowing it to continue its own activities undisturbed. If the bear is aware of you but has not acted aggressively, back away slowly while keeping an eye on the bear, talk in a calm, firm voice while slowly

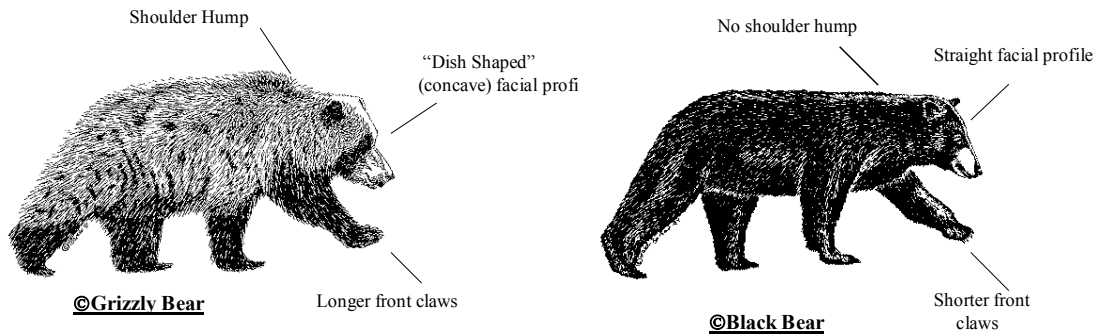
waving your arms above your head. These actions will help the bear confirm that you are a human and not a prey animal. Grizzly bears do not normally prey on humans. A bear that stands up on its hind legs is not acting aggressively, but is curious and is trying to identify you. Help it out by following the above guidelines. Scientific evidence clearly indicates that when given the opportunity most bears will avoid humans.

- **If A Bear Approaches or Charges You**

**Do not run: do not drop your pack.** A pack can help protect your body in case of an attack. Dropping a pack may encourage the bear to approach humans for food in the future. Most charges are bluffs, sometimes coming to within 10 feet (3 meters) of a person before stopping or veering off. Stand still until the bear stops and has moved away, then slowly back off. Due to the small size of the trees in the sub-arctic, climbing a tree may not provide protection.

- **If A Grizzly Bear Attacks**

The grizzly's ferocious reputation arises largely from the fact that a female grizzly will aggressively defend her young. Most attacks are defensive, therefore, if a grizzly bear does actually make contact with you, drop to the ground and play dead. However, do not play dead before contact is imminent, as it may elicit a curious approach from the bear. Leave your pack on and put your arms around the back of your head and neck for protection. The majority of charges are from female grizzlies protecting their young. By playing dead you will neutralize the threat that you represent to the bears cubs. However, if the attack is prolonged fight back vigorously because the bear may be preying on you.



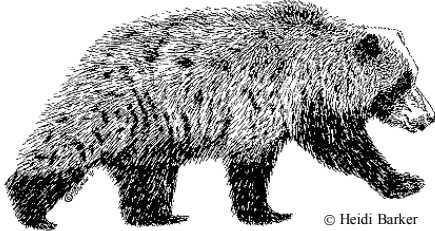
- **If A Black Bear Attacks**

If you are being approached or followed by a black bear, aggressively chase the bear away, even if it is a female with young. Black bears have been known to stalk and prey-on humans in a few isolated incidents. Black bear attacks are rarely defensive. Females will generally send their cubs up a tree in order to protect them rather than aggressively defend them. If attacked by a black bear fight back vigorously.

- **Tell a Ranger**

Please report all bear encounters to a ranger. This information is used for management and research on bear-human interaction.










## Camping and Bears Brochure



© Heidi Barker

## CAMPING AND BEARS

For the safety of bears and people please follow these simple guidelines while camping at Denali National Park:

-  **NEVER LEAVE FOOD UNATTENDED**, even for a short time. Always store food in vehicles or food lockers located in the campgrounds.
-  If a bear or wolf approaches, gather up all food and slowly back away to your vehicle.
-  When preparing meals, bring out only what you plan to eat immediately. Think about what to do if a bear approaches and discuss the plan with your partners.
-  Dispose of waste food, wrappers, containers, and food particles in bear proof trash cans only.
-  Never feed wildlife of any kind (including gulls, squirrels, and foxes).
-  Please do not burn trash in campfires.
-  Keep dogs on a leash at all times. They may be walked on the road only. Do not leave them outside unattended.
-  Report possible food/garbage problems to campground host or ranger.
-  Dispose of gray water at the following locations:

Riley Creek Campground has gray water sinks near the restrooms. Clean food particles out of and rinse sinks, dispose of food particles in bear proof trash cans, and close doors when you leave.

Savage Campground ... dump gray water in the flush toilets, not in portable toilets.

Teklanika Campground has gray water basins near the restrooms. Please clean food particles out of basin and rinse with water from a spigot.

Sanctuary & Igloo Campgrounds ... remove food particles from gray water and dispose of in bear proof trash cans. Disperse cleaned gray water in bushes away from campsites.

Wonder Lake Campground has a gray water sink at the restroom building. Clean food particles out of and rinse the sink well.

Fortunately the bears at Denali rarely get human food or garbage and therefore are not as likely to seek contact with people. Please help us to continue this unique situation. See the [Denali Alpenglow](#) for additional bear safety information. Thank you.

Created 6/9/03

## Campground Informational Sign



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### Bear Information on Denali's WEB site – text only:

<http://www.nps.gov/dena/home/visitorinfo/bearsafety/home.html>

### Safety in Bear Country

I. Minimizing Bear - Human Conflicts is a priority responsibility of all park and concession employees. We all need to watch for situations that could lead to conflicts.

- \* Food/garbage handling or storage problems

- \* Inappropriate human behavior around bears

II. How do we avoid problems with bears?

### FRONTCOUNTRY

(Hotel, H.Q., roads, campgrounds)

1. Prevent all food and garbage problems

- Keep housing and hotel areas clean
- No food, beverages, coolers, or dirty grills left outside; not even empty cans or coolers
- Always use bear-proof trash cans and dumpsters.
- Never leave trash beside a full can.
- BE RESPONSIBLE. Report or correct problems.

2. Stay aware of bear activity

- Bears commonly use frontcountry areas
- Watch for bear sign: tracks, scat, kills
- Respect posted warnings. Removing signs endangers people and bears.

3. Be careful on roads and trails.

- Stay alert and make noise while hiking or biking
- If you encounter a bear while bicycling
  - a) Do NOT try to outrun the bear
  - b) Keep food with you
  - c) Keep bike with you. Hold bike between you and the bear. Back away slowly.

## **BACKCOUNTRY**

1. Watch for bear sign. Recognize prime feeding areas and avoid them if possible, i.e., berry patches.

2. Bears travel along trails and rivers. Watch for natural bottlenecks that could funnel bears into your camp.

3. Avoid surprising bears. Travel in the open when possible. Make noise when visibility is limited.

4. Travel/camp with one or more companions. More eyes can watch for bears. Conversation is a good way to alert bears to your presence. Bears are less likely to approach groups.

5. Never approach a bear. Get out of the way or detour widely if you have that option, especially if a bear is not aware of you.

6. When a bear sees you, let the bear know that you are human. Wave your arms over your head and speak in a firm, even tone. Back away slowly.

7. If a bear approaches, **HOLD YOUR GROUND, DON'T RUN, AND DON'T DROP YOUR PACK.** Back away slowly if the bear stops.

8. Never play dead unless a bear actually makes contact with you, then keep your pack on, pull your knees up toward your chin and stay as quiet as possible.
9. Never cook or eat in or at your tent. Listen carefully to the information given at the backcountry desk about setting up your camp.
10. Avoid eating or storing food where visibility is limited. Be prepared to re-pack all food, even cooked food, in your BRFC and lock the lid at a moment's notice.

#### OTHER WILDLIFE:

Denali is considered a pristine wilderness, and you will very likely encounter wildlife while in the backcountry. Please keep Denali's animals wild for others to enjoy by following these basic guidelines when encountering wildlife:

Do not feed wildlife.

Do not approach or follow wildlife.

If your presence alters an animal's behavior, you are too close.

## **Bear Safety Precautions for Researchers and Contractors**

**Researchers and contractors working in Denali National Park and Preserve are required to follow the same regulations and guidelines concerning bears as other visitors to the park.**

**Under no circumstances are bears to be approached or harassed.** Except for specific, documented bear management or bear research purposes bears should not be approached. The only other possible exception is for defense of life or property.

**All food and food waste must be stored and disposed of in a bear proof manner.** This includes all canned goods, MREs, and beverages. Acceptable storage areas are hard-sided vehicles or buildings, bear resistant food canisters (BRFCs), locking metal drums, or bear proof garbage cans. For any long term or over-night work in the park this type of storage is required. Coolers are not acceptable, even when stored on vehicle roofs. Food carried on day hikes must not be left unattended.

**Guns are illegal in the wilderness area of the park except for bear research and management or law enforcement reasons.** When proper food storage and other safety guidelines are followed in Denali, guns are unnecessary. If situations develop where guns seem necessary an effort should be made to contact wildlife management personnel first.

**Unfenced field camps in the backcountry should not be left unattended for extended periods.** Even when human food is not stored there, tents and other equipment can attract curious bears, and damage could occur.

**Fenced camps must have gates closed and secured when they are unattended.** Reasonable measures must be taken to keep fences as bear proof as possible. Bears may attempt to go under as well as over a fence. Any problems with fenced camps should be reported.

**Cabins used as housing should be secured against bears when unattended and food and garbage smells should be kept to a minimum.** Gray water should be dispersed away from cabins so that odors are not concentrated just outside the cabin door. Bears commonly use the areas around park cabins and may be active day or night.

All interactions with bears in the field should be reported on a Bear Information Management System (BIMS) form. Interactions are instances when a bear is aware of your presence and reacts either passively (ignoring you) or actively (running, approaching, etc.) Any case of bears getting human food, causing property damage, or injury should be reported immediately. Report bear problems to the Wildlife Management Technicians, a ranger, or the park dispatch office.

I understand these safety guidelines and have been given bear encounter information.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Keep Wildlife Wild Brochure



**KEEP WILDLIFE WILD**  
**Never Feed or Approach Wildlife**

This includes birds, squirrels, foxes and all other wild animals.

Feeding or approaching wildlife can cause problems for both humans and wildlife. Wild animals that have learned to associate humans with food rewards often become dependent on human-related food and garbage. They lose their wildness and may become threats to people, property, and themselves.



**For more information contact**  
Denali National Park and Preserve  
PO Box 9  
Denali Park AK 99755  
907-683-2294

**Keep Wildlife Wild**

**Never Feed or Approach Wildlife**



**Denali National Park and Preserve**

**What Can Happen**

Feeding and approaching wild animals changes their behavior, often with catastrophic results. Animals are often injured or killed when they spend more time around vehicles at roads and parking areas. They are also easier for predators to catch in these open areas.

**Feeding causes wild animals to lose their natural fear of humans**  
Wildlife can become an easy target, or the bold advances of an animal may be misinterpreted as an "attack" on a person.



**You risk injury when you do not keep a respectful distance from wild animals**  
Wildlife can misinterpret your actions. They don't know where the food stops and your fingers begin. Once again, animals lose when people complain of being bitten or "attacked".

**Many animals have specialized diets and the wrong foods can negatively affect their health**  
Artificial food sources can also cause increased wildlife populations that natural food supplies can't support.



**Wild animals often cause property damage when they are fed human food**  
Animals will chew or bite into packs, coolers and even enter vehicles and buildings when they have learned that people have food. Foxes, squirrels, and bears have entered or damaged tents to get at food stored improperly.



**Help Prevent Problems**

- Never feed or approach wild birds or other animals.
- Properly store food and dispose of garbage in bear-proof garbage cans.
- Never leave food unattended, even for a short while.
- Pick up food scraps and wipe down tabletops after eating.
- Never overfill garbage cans. Take your trash to a can that is less full.
- Encourage others to follow these instructions.

**KEEP WILDLIFE WILD**  
**Never Feed or Approach Wildlife**



## Campground Bulletin Boards Bear Safety Information

### Regulations You Need to Know

#### Food Storage for Bear Safety

All food, including cans and bottles, ice chests, garbage and equipment used to cook or store food, must be properly secured from the park's wildlife. Unless you are actively preparing a meal, properly store these items by placing them in a hard-sided vehicle or in the food storage lockers provided. Scented items (such as toothpaste and lotion) should also be treated as food.

### Bear Encounter Tips

- While hiking in areas of poor visibility, make noise by talking or singing.
- Be aware of your surroundings while hiking. Look for bear scat or tracks.
- If you come across an animal carcass, leave the area immediately. Inform a park ranger of its location. A bear may be feeding in the area.
- If you do see a bear, DO NOT RUN! Bears respond to running animals by chasing them.
- If the bear is unaware of your presence, back away slowly and leave the area immediately.
- If the bear is aware of your presence and is approaching you, stand your ground, wave your arms above your head and speak in a firm, calm voice.
- Do not leave your pack or tent unattended with food.
- Do not climb a tree to stand your ground. Do not throw rocks, throw your arms and speaking. Do not turn your back on the bear. When the bear is close, gradually back away slowly.
- If you are in a vehicle, stay in the vehicle.
- If you are in a tent, stay in the tent.



### Camping in Bear Country

Denali is home to both the grizzly and the black bear and they will enter this campground on occasion. However, you may decrease the likelihood of bear encounters by following these suggestions:

- Do not approach bears or other wild animals; they are dangerous.
- Packs and sleeping bags should be kept free from food odors. As a precaution against food odors, wash your hands and face before retiring. If possible, do not sleep in the clothes you wore when cooking.
- Keep a clean camp. Wash the picnic table and grill after use. Put garbage in trash containers. Do not leave food scraps around or in your camp.
- Regulations require that all food, cooking utensils and ice chests be kept in a closed vehicle or stored in the food lockers provided. Treat scented items (such as toothpaste and lotion) as food. Do not eat or store food in your tent.

If you see a bear in the campground, have property damaged by a bear or are injured by a bear please contact a ranger or the campground host as soon as possible.



KEEP WILDLIFE WILD

Never Feed or Approach Wildlife

## Alpenglow Bear Safety Article - 2003

# Close Encounters of a Bear Kind

## AVOIDING ENCOUNTERS

Denali National Park and Preserve is home to both black bears and grizzly bears. Black bears inhabit the forested areas of the park, while grizzly bears mainly live on the open tundra. Almost all bears seen by visitors along the Park Road are grizzlies. The bears of Denali are wild creatures, free to behave as they wish. If annoyed, these solitary animals can be very dangerous to intruders. For your own protection, and to keep Denali bears healthy and wild, please carefully read and abide by these rules.

As visitors to this wildlife sanctuary, each of us has an obligation to respect bears and their habitat. These rules are strictly enforced in Denali. Failure to observe them may result in citations and fines.

- **BE ALERT:** Bears are active both day and night and can be anywhere. Watch for tracks and scat.
- **DON'T SURPRISE:** Bears may perceive you as a threat if you startle them.
- **MAKE NOISE:** Warn bears of your presence by making noise—sing, shout, talk. Be especially careful in dense brush where visibility is low, and along rivers where bears cannot hear you over the noise of the water.
- **NEVER APPROACH:** Bears should live as free from human interference as possible. Give them space. It is illegal to approach within 1/4 mile.

**Please report all bear incidents and encounters to a ranger. Park rangers and biologists need this information to document bear behavior for research and management purposes.**

For more information on human-bear encounters, read *Backcountry Bear Basics* by Dave Smith; or pick up a detailed handout from the Visitor Center.

Allowing a bear to obtain human food or garbage, even once, may cause it to seek out more human food. Eventually, if the bear becomes a threat to human safety, it will be killed. For this reason, it is against the law to feed bears in Denali, either purposely or by carelessly leaving food or garbage where bears can get it.



Photo ©Karen Ward



## IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR

- ❖ **DO NOT RUN!** Running may elicit a chase response. Bears can run faster than 30 mph (50 km/hr). You cannot outrun them. If the bear is unaware of you, detour quickly and quietly away. Give the bear plenty of room, allowing it to continue its activities undisturbed.
- ❖ **BACK AWAY SLOWLY IF THE BEAR IS AWARE OF YOU!** Speak in a low, calm voice while waving your arms slowly above your head. Bears that stand up on their hind legs are not threatening you, but merely trying to identify you.
- ❖ **SHOULD A BEAR APPROACH OR CHARGE YOU—DO NOT RUN, DO NOT DROP YOUR PACK!**

Bears sometimes charge, coming within ten feet of a person before stopping or veering off. Dropping a pack may encourage the bear to approach people for food. **STAND STILL** until the bear moves away, then slowly back off.

- ❖ **IF A GRIZZLY MAKES CONTACT WITH YOU, PLAY DEAD.** Curl up into a ball with your knees tucked into your stomach, and your hands laced around the back of your neck. Leave your pack on to protect your back. If the attack is prolonged, fight back vigorously.

- ❖ **IF A BLACK BEAR MAKES CONTACT WITH YOU, FIGHT BACK.**



Photo © Kennan Ward

### Campgrounds

- ❖ All food, food containers, coolers and dirty cooking utensils must be stored in a closed, hard-sided vehicle or in campground food-storage lockers whenever they are not in use. This includes freeze-dried and canned foods, as well as beverages and odorous items, such as soap, toothpaste and sunscreen.
- ❖ Keep a clean camp. Trash and garbage must be stored in the same manner as food, or in a bear-resistant food container (BRFC) located in the campground. Scrape unwanted food from pots and plates into a BRFC.
- ❖ Never leave food, containers, or garbage unattended even for just a few minutes.



Photo © Thomas D. Mangelsen

### Backcountry

In most of Denali's backcountry units, all food and garbage must be stored in BRFCs. Issued at the Backcountry Desk with your backcountry permit, these containers are lightweight, cylindrical canisters specifically designed to keep bears from obtaining food and garbage. Since the introduction of mandatory BRFC use in 1984, there has been a 95% reduction in bears obtaining backpackers' food and an 88% decrease in property damage.

- ❖ All food, including freeze-dried and canned foods, beverages, and odorous items, such as soap and sunscreen, must be kept in the BRFC when not in use.
- ❖ Cook and store food at least 300 feet downwind from your tent in an area with good visibility in all directions. Keep an eye out for approaching bears. Be prepared to put food away in a hurry.
- ❖ Avoid cooking greasy or odorous foods. Do not sleep in the same clothes you wore while cooking.
- ❖ Keep a clean camp. Pack out all garbage.

### Pepper Spray

The use of pepper spray as a bear deterrent is a personal choice. If you decide to carry it, be aware that wind, spray distance, rain and product shelf life all influence its effectiveness. Pepper spray canisters must be secured in packs with safety pins in place to prevent accidental discharge while traveling on buses.

## Appendix Q: Backcountry Use Guidelines



Michael Lapan Photo

### Getting Started

This brochure contains information vital to the success of your backcountry trip in Denali National Park and Preserve. The following paragraphs will outline the Denali backcountry permit system, the steps required to obtain your permit, and some important tips for a safe and memorable wilderness experience.

#### Denali's Trailless Wilderness

Traveling and camping in this expansive terrain is special. The lack of developed trails, bridges, or campsites means that you are free to determine your own route and discover Denali for yourself. However, with this freedom comes responsibility – responsibility for yourself and for the wilderness. Self-reliance is paramount. You must be prepared to travel crosscountry through remote terrain in harsh weather, and rescue yourself in the event of problems. It is also your responsibility to help protect the special resources and opportunities that are present at Denali by carefully following the principles of Leave No Trace so that your travels do not diminish the experience of those who follow you.

#### Backcountry Unit System

The 6 million acres of Denali National Park and Preserve is divided into 87 separate backcountry units (see map on reverse side). Forty-one units within the Denali Wilderness have a limit on the number of individual people that can camp in each unit per night. During peak summer visitation many of these units are heavily used, so please come to the Backcountry Desk with several alternative trip itineraries. Don't become discouraged if your first choice is not available. Remember, there are 6 million acres to choose from, and all of the units offer excellent wilderness trips!

Pay attention to the following requirements when planning a trek through Denali's backcountry:

- Forty-one backcountry units within the Denali Wilderness have a specific quota.
- Unit availability determines where you may camp each night and you must camp in the unit for which you have a permit.
- Maximum 7 consecutive nights in a single unit.
- Maximum 30 nights in the park and provide good travel routes.
- Permits are issued only in person (no telephone reservations), and no more than 24 hours in advance of the first day of your trip.
- All party members must be present to receive a permit.
- Permits are not required for day hiking in the backcountry.

#### Wildlife of Denali



Kevin Ward Photo

#### Bears

Symbolic of the Alaska wilderness, both grizzly bears and black bears inhabit the park and may be encountered in the backcountry. To keep these magnificent creatures wild and enhance your personal safety, keep the following in mind:

- Make noise while hiking to alert bears of your presence.
- Use Bear Resistant Food Containers and store them 100 yards (meters) from cooking areas and tent sites.
- Be alert for bears and alter your activities to avoid them.
- Never run from a bear.

■ Pepper spray can be carried as an added precaution. However, it is useful only as a last resort in the event of an emergency, and should not be viewed as substitute for proper backcountry behavior.

When you visit the Backcountry Desk, you will be provided with more detailed information about hiking in bear country.

#### Wildlife

Denali is home to sheep, caribou, wolves, foxes, bears, moose, eagles, ptarmigan, and other wildlife that you are very likely to encounter in the backcountry. Please keep Denali's animals wild by following these guidelines when encountering wildlife:

- Do not feed or allow wildlife to obtain human foods.
- Maintain a **minimum 1/4-mile (7 km) distance from bears.**
- Do not approach or follow wildlife. Maintain a **minimum 75 foot (23 meter) distance from all other animals.**
- If your presence alters an animal's behavior, you are too close.

#### Bear Resistant Food Container (BRFC)

These hard plastic portable containers are a vital part of Denali's bear/human conflict management program. You must store all food, garbage, and scented items in a BRFC when camping overnight in units where they are required. Their consistent use has resulted in a bear population that does not associate humans or their property with food sources. A small BRFC weighs 3 lbs. and holds 3-5 days of food for one person, and the larger BRFC weighs 5 lbs. and carries 7-10 days of food. BRFCs are issued free of charge with backcountry permits and must be returned within 48 hours following a trip. If the BRFC is lost or damaged, you may be held responsible for its replacement. Kevlar or bear-resistant bags are not permitted.

#### Critical Wildlife Closures

There are both permanent and temporary wildlife closures every year in Denali. These areas are restricted to all entry and exit for the mutual protection of humans and critical wildlife species. It is your responsibility to recognize and respect the boundaries of these closures. Ask a ranger at the Backcountry Desk for closure information. Failure to avoid closures may result in a citation.

### Getting a Permit

Permits are available at the Backcountry Desk located in the Visitor Access Center (VAC) at the Riley Creek Entrance Area.

#### Step 1: Plan Your Itinerary

Visit [www.nps.gov/denali/home/hiking](http://www.nps.gov/denali/home/hiking) to preplan several alternative itineraries prior to your arrival in the park. Building flexibility in your plans is very important because certain units may be unavailable at the time you actually wish to obtain your permit. Remember to be conservative when predicting your daily mileage. There are no trails, and travel can be slow and difficult in brushy areas or when fording glacial rivers. Upon your arrival at the Backcountry Desk at the VAC, several additional resources, such as unit description guides, local maps, and knowledgeable staff, will be available to assist you in planning your trip.

#### Step 2: Watch Backcountry Video

This informative 30-minute video program is presented at the VAC and will answer many questions you will have about negotiating the Denali backcountry. It covers topics such as campsite selection, bear and wildlife encounters, river crossings, Leave No Trace principles, Bear Resistant Food Containers (BRFCs), and much more. All members of your party must view this program.

#### Step 3: Attend Safety Talk

Following the video, all party members must be present for a brief safety talk to receive the backcountry permit and the Bear Resistant Food Containers (BRFC) that is required for proper food storage. You must sign your permit in recognition of what you saw and heard.

#### Terrain of Denali

There are five major terrain categories in the Denali backcountry. Here's what you can expect:

- **Gravel River Bars:** these flat, rocky surfaces characterize most river bars in the park and provide good travel routes.
- **Wet Tundra:** this terrain is marshy and interspersed with hummocks. Travel can be slow and tricky.
- **Dry Tundra:** dry tundra generally exists at higher elevations and affords good, solid footing and limited brush.
- **Brushy Tundra:** typically occurs in bands or thickets between 2500-3500 feet, and often limits visibility and travel speed.
- **Glacial Moraine:** located at the base of glaciers and often denoted on maps by stippled areas, a moraine consists of ice covered with dirt and debris. Travel is rough and time-consuming.

Understandably, many of the most popular units are predominantly Dry Tundra terrain. However, permits for these units are also the most difficult to obtain, and sightings of other hikers are more common. We recommend you consider other less requested units that may require an initial extra effort to climb above the Brushy Tundra, but then typically also offer large areas of Dry Tundra, as well as exceptional opportunities for solitude.

#### River Crossings

There are no bridges across rivers in the backcountry. You must negotiate your own river crossings and pack gear accordingly to keep dry in the event of an accidental swim. Water temperature is approximately 36° F (2° C), and a cold immersion may result in high risk of hypothermia. Try to cross where the river is braided and dispersed, rather than concentrated into a single deep, narrow channel. Due to the high silt content of the water, it is often difficult to ascertain the true depth of the water.

#### Other Information

##### Bicycle Camping

If you wish to travel the park road and hike from your bicycle, you must still camp at least 1/2-mile (1.3 km) from the road and not be visible from it. Bicycles must be stored at designated bike racks at established campgrounds, the Visitor Access Center, Toklat Road Camp, or Lelton Visitor Center while you hike. Reservations are required if you wish to stay overnight in campgrounds along the park road. To make reservations, call 1-800-622-7275. Each Camper bus can accommodate two bicycles.



Kevin Ward Photo

#### Caching

For extended backcountry treks, you may cache food and supplies in bear-proof food lockers located at any established campground area, the Visitor Access Center, Toklat Road Camp, or Lelton Visitor Center. Label food/supplies with party name and date you intend to retrieve it. Denali National Park is not responsible for caches.

#### Mountaineering

If you intend to ascend Mt. McKinley or Mt. Foraker, contact the Talkeetna Ranger Station at 907-733-2231 or visit [www.nps.gov/denali/home/mountaineering](http://www.nps.gov/denali/home/mountaineering). Applications for permits must be received at least 60 days in advance of your expedition date. Registration is also recommended for other climbs.

## Denali National Park and Preserve Backcountry Camping Guide

Allow approximately one hour for the permit process, which consists of five basic steps:

tion that you understand all backcountry rules and regulations. Violations of the conditions of the permit result in adverse impacts to park resources and legal consequences.

#### Step 4: Delineate Your Map

Unit boundaries and wildlife closures are not marked in the backcountry. It is your responsibility to know their location. Fifteen minute (1 inch = 1 mile) USGS topographic quad maps are strongly recommended and are available for purchase at the VAC bookstore. After obtaining the proper maps, delineate unit boundaries and wildlife closure boundaries so that you will know where to hike and camp during your trip.

#### Step 5: Obtain Camper Bus Ticket

Access to most park backcountry units requires use of the Visitor Transportation System (VTS). Special Camper Buses that are built to accommodate people and their large gear packs depart the VAC several times a day. To secure space for your party, you should purchase tickets at the VAC soon after obtaining your backcountry permit. This bus system will take you to the start of your hike. When your trip is finished, or if you wish to move to another part of the park during the course of your trip, simply return to the park road and the next available VTS bus will pick you up.

For more information on the park Visitor Transportation System (VTS), visit [www.nps.gov/denali/home/roadtour](http://www.nps.gov/denali/home/roadtour).

depths can also vary widely during a trip depending on rainfall and temperatures. Glacial rivers generally run lower in early morning hours, so plan accordingly.



Kevin Ward Photo

#### Glacier Crossings

Glaciers present numerous hazards, and any form of glacier travel will require extra preparation. If you plan to traverse the upper ice and snow portions of a glacier, carry appropriate equipment, such as ice axes and crampons and know how to use them. Crossing glacial moraines also present many potential hazards, such as debris slides, ice caves, and uneven terrain.

#### Camping in Southern Denali

Hiking and camping south of the crest of the Alaska Range requires additional preparation and skill. This area contains ice fields, sheer rock, heavily crevassed glaciers, extremely large rivers, and very dense brush. To obtain permits to camp in these areas, contact the Talkeetna Ranger Station at 907-733-2231.

#### Parking

While camping in the backcountry, you may park your private vehicle in the Riley Creek Campground overflow parking area at no charge. This parking area is located approximately 1/4-mile (1.3 km) from the Visitor Access Center.

#### Winter Camping

This camping guide is intended for summer season camping only. For information on winter camping in Denali, contact Park Headquarters at 907-683-2294.

#### Helpful Publications

The Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA) sells material to aid the backcountry user. The following publications may be useful in planning your trip:

- *The Backcountry Companion* by Jon Nierenberg/ANHA.
- *Backcountry Bear Basics* by Dave Smith.

You may also contact ANHA at 907-274-8440, or visit their website at [www.alaskanha.org](http://www.alaskanha.org).



Bob Butherford Photo

### Leave No Trace and Safety

#### Camping

There are no established campsites in the Denali backcountry. Use the following guidelines when selecting your campsite:

- Your tent must be at least **1/2-mile (1.3 km) away from the park road and not visible from it.**
- **Camp on durable surfaces whenever possible** such as gravel river bars, and avoid damaging fragile tundra.
- In pristine areas like Denali, **avoid camping where others have camped.**
- **Do not move rocks or plants:** leave the area as you found it so that future hikers do not see signs of your use.



Kim Pearce Photo

#### Cooking

Fires are not permitted in the Denali Wilderness. Fuel for portable camp stoves is available for purchase at the Denali convenience store, located in the immediate vicinity of the VAC. When cooking, remain alert for bears: be ready to pack up and move quickly.

#### Drinking Water

Giardia and Cryptosporidia are bacteria found in unfiltered water and present serious health risks. Take one of the following precautions before drinking water from a natural source:

- Boil for 1 minute.
- Use a water filter.
- Treat with iodine tablets.

If you use a water filter, remember that many of Denali's rivers carry glacial silt. This silt will quickly clog your water filter and render it inoperable. The addition of silt-stopper devices is highly recommended for any water filter.

#### Sanitation

Neither pit nor chemical toilets are available in the backcountry. You must follow these rules for proper waste disposal:

- Dig a hole at least 6 inches deep (15 centimeters) and at least 100 feet (30 meters) away from water for fecal waste disposal.
- Pack out all sanitation products.

#### Minimum Impact Hiking

To keep the Denali backcountry in pristine condition for others, please take care in how you hike:

- **Hike on durable surfaces whenever possible,** such as gravel river bars.
- **Avoid hiking single file;** spread out and disperse to prevent the formation of social trails.

#### Gear Checklist

The following equipment is highly recommended when venturing out into the Denali backcountry:

- Hiking boots (waterproofed) and wool socks.
- Neoprene socks and gaiters for river crossings.
- Rain parka and pants (ponchos not recommended).
- Polypropylene, nylon, or wool clothing (avoid cotton). Be prepared for temperatures ranging from 30° to 80° F (-1° to 27° C) in the summer months.
- Stove, fuel, cookware and water bottles.
- Water filter (preferably equipped with silt stopper device).
- Compass and map (maps available at Visitor Access Center).
- Toilet paper and trowel.
- Tent with rain fly and waterproof floor (bivouacking is not recommended).
- Sleeping bag and pad (for any overnight summer trip, protection to 20° F (-7° C) is suggested).
- Insect repellent and/or head net.
- Emergency gear, such as first aid kit, knife, and a signaling device such as a whistle, signal mirror, or flare.
- Large plastic or waterproof bags to protect the gear inside your pack.



#### For more information contact:

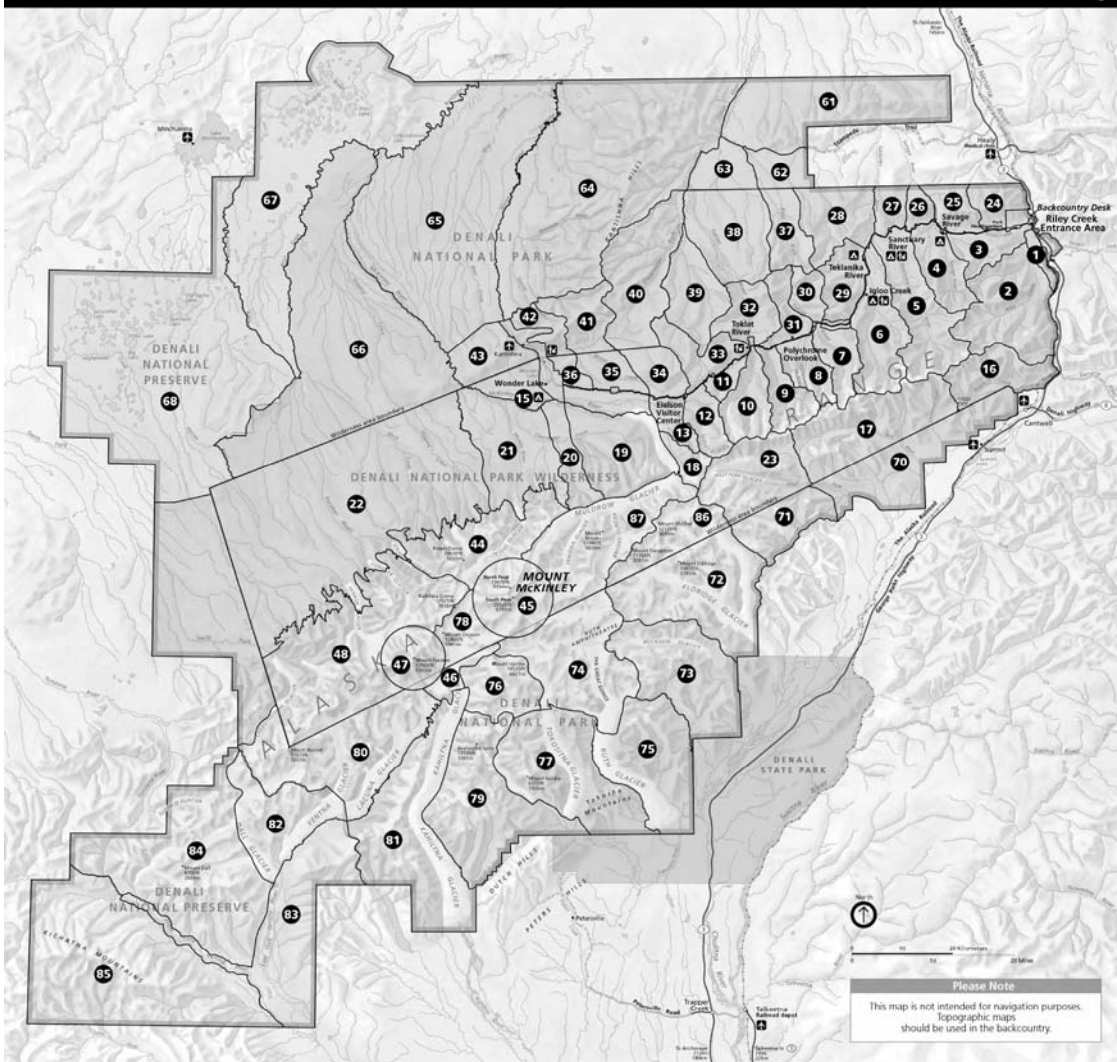
Backcountry Operations  
Denali National Park and Preserve  
PO Box 9  
Denali Park, AK 99755

Phone: May - Sept. 907-683-9510  
Oct. - April 907-683-2294  
Fax: 907-683-9617  
Email: [denali\\_info@nps.gov](mailto:denali_info@nps.gov)

Backcountry Internet Site:  
[www.nps.gov/denali/home/hiking/index.html](http://www.nps.gov/denali/home/hiking/index.html)



## Backcountry Units



No.	Name	BRFC	Quota	Acreage
1	Triple Lakes	Req	12	6,567
2	Riley Creek	Req	12	79,533
3	Jenny Creek	Req	4	22,740
4	Upper Savage	Req	6	32,578
5	Upper Sanctuary	Req	6	67,066
6	Upper Teklanika	Req	6	54,011
7	Upper East Fork	Req	4	24,255
8	Polychrome Glaciers	Req	6	23,379
9	East Branch Upper Toklat	Req	6	26,250
10	West Branch Upper Toklat	Req	6	31,432
11	Stony Dome	Req	2	8,693
12	Sunset / Sunrise Glaciers	Req	4	21,077
13	Mount Eielson	Req	4	14,851
14	McKinley Bar East	Req	4	17,432
15	McKinley Bar West	Req	4	21,094
16	Windy Creek	Req	8	39,076
17	Foggy and Easy Pass	Req	8	88,405
18	Upper Glacier Creek	Req	4	12,471
19	Prairie Creek	Req	4	69,236
20	McGonagall Pass	Req	4	25,079
21	Muddy River	Req	8	81,830
22	Upper Forker	Req	—	371,494
23	West Fork Glacier	Req	—	64,848
24	Mount Healy	Req	4	20,424
25	Healy Ridge	Req	4	20,403
26	Primrose Ridge	Req	4	9,679

No.	Name	BRFC	Quota	Acreage
27	Mount Wright	Req	4	14,412
28	Suzana River	Req	8	45,457
29	Iglloo Mountain	Req	4	27,763
30	Tributary Creek	Req	4	14,960
31	Polychrome Mountain	Req	6	18,788
32	Middle Toklat	Req	4	29,421
33	Stony Hill	Req	4	30,119
34	Mount Galen	Req	4	22,769
35	Moose Creek	Req	4	19,732
36	Jumbo Creek	Req	2	8,195
37	Lower East Fork	Req	6	29,421
38	Lower Toklat	Req	6	68,476
39	Stony Creek	Req	4	45,130
40	Cleaver Fork	Req	12	82,532
41	Spruce Peak	Req	12	32,317
42	Eureka Creek	Req	12	16,127
43	Ildorado Creek	Req	12	32,542
44	Peters Glacier	Req	—	75,233
45	Mount McKinley	Req	—	50,011
46	Upper Kahiltna	Req	—	24,480
47	Mount Foraker	Req	—	32,008
48	Heron Glacier	Req	—	177,513
49	Stampede	Req	—	121,934
50	Southeast Stampede	Req	—	21,864
51	Southwest Stampede	Req	—	25,367
52	Karlshof Hills	Req	—	322,355

No.	Name	BRFC	Quota	Acreage
53	Moose-McKinley	Req	—	312,189
54	McKinley-Birch	Req	—	311,395
55	Birch-Foraker Preserve	Req	—	282,635
56	Heron-Highpower Preserve	Req	—	410,396
57	Swift Fork	Req	—	155,143
58	Bull River	Req	—	84,464
59	Ohio Creek	Req	—	39,887
60	Eldridge Glacier	Req	—	177,309
61	Bucklin Glacier	Req	—	99,896
62	Upper Ruth	Req	—	104,656
63	Lower Ruth	Req	—	96,070
64	Mount Hunter	Req	—	39,752
65	Tokositna Glacier	Req	—	144,861
66	Middle Kahiltna	Req	—	11,905
67	Little Switzerland	Req	—	121,150
68	Upper Yentna-Lacuna	Req	—	124,748
69	Lower Kahiltna	Req	—	144,403
70	Dall-Yentna Preserve	Req	—	69,480
71	Yentna River Preserve	Req	—	130,689
72	Mount Dall Preserve	Req	—	197,565
73	Kitchatna Preserve	Req	—	247,423
74	Mount Mather	Req	—	41,368
75	Mount Brooks	Req	—	97,065

BRFC = Bear Resistant Food Container    Req = Required  
Rec = Recommended

## **Appendix R: Field Guidelines**

These field guidelines are intended to provide general descriptions of management responses for the most common types of problems experienced at Denali. It must be understood that every interaction will pose its own unique set of considerations.

### **1. Repeated Observations of Bear(s) in One Location:**

- Patrol ranger may check area for a carcass, berry patch, etc. which may warrant a temporary closure.
- Contact Chief Ranger and Wildlife Biologist if it appears closure may be needed. Contact the Communication Center if a closure is implemented (Appendix H).
- Remove closure when hazard is gone.
- Document observations (Appendix G).

### **2. Bear Observed in close proximity of Developed Area:**

- Notify Wildlife Management Technicians and/or Law Enforcement Rangers.
- Inform other staff or visitor center staff if in area of VC.
- Inform visitors or residents in the area.
- Inform the Communication Center.
- Be especially alert for food and sanitation problems during routine patrols of nearby developed area.
- Monitor the area if the developed area is Eielson Visitor Center or if the animal seems to be traveling toward a developed area.
- Document observations

### **3. Bear in Developed Area:**

- Notify Wildlife Management Technicians and/or Law Enforcement Rangers.
- Inform other staff or visitor center staff if in area of VC.
- Inform visitors or residents in the area.
- Inform the Communication Center.
- Monitor the bears' activities.
- Document initial report or observation.

#### **A. Initial Contact with Bear:**

- Attempt to mark the bear (i.e., paint ball) for future positive identification.
- Initiate hazing.
- Post "bear in area" signs in campground (Appendix B).
- The Sub-district Ranger will initiate extra patrols to contact visitors and eliminate unattended food and garbage.
- Interpretive Division will mention the situation during walks and talks.
- The Sub-district Ranger will request that VC give additional warning to campers receiving permits for that area.
- Continue to monitor the bear's activities and behavior patterns.
- Document all actions (Appendix G).

**B. Second Contact; Same Bear and initial hazing has not worked:**

- Initial Closure:
- Consider closure, especially for small campgrounds, to give the bear(s) a chance to move out of the area.
- Maintain closure for 5 days and patrol the area for the presence of the bear(s).
- If there is no bear(s) after 5 days, open the area.
- If the bear(s) is still frequenting the area, consider extending closure.
- Mark the bear (radio collar).
- Initiate aversive conditioning of the bear.
- If hazing or aversive conditioning fails, consider translocation.
- Document all actions.

**4. People On Road within ¼ mile of a bear.**

- Provide information about the current situation and bears in general
- Offer transportation out of area
- If the bear(s) is very close, monitor the situation, or remove the people from the area.
- If people are intentionally approaching the bear(s), consider written warnings or citations.
- Document all actions.

## 5. Private Vehicles Stopped, Observing Bear.

- Provide information about bears and safety around bears. Emphasize the problems that arise when bears obtain unnatural food and the effects of traffic on wildlife.
- If time permits, monitor the situation, especially in spring or fall when private vehicles are allowed to drive the road and DENA and shuttle bus traffic is light.
- Encourage people to move on after a reasonable time observing the bear.
- Rangers should try to stay with groups of photographers and enforce Code of Ethics for photographers with permits. Emphasize to visitors that not only human safety is of concern, but also the safety of the bear.
- Document all actions.

## 6. Dead Animal

- Notifications
- Inform other staff or visitor center staff if in area of VC.
- Inform visitors or residents in the area.
- Inform the Communication Center.
- Conduct an investigation.
- Notify visitor center staff and bus drivers so visitors entering the area can be informed.
- Document initial report or observation

### A. No bear on carcass:

- 1) **If the carcass is in area where a closure won't be effective, such as within 300 meters of developed site, Visitor Center, Science and Learning Center, Riley Creek Campground, within 50 meters of Highway 3, or along Alaska Railroad:**
  - Attempt to move carcass to an area less frequented by people or where closures or patrols can control people.
  - The Wildlife Biologist, in consultation with the Chief Ranger, will decide on the relocation site. (e.g. the service road North of Sanctuary Campground, or the service road East of Teklanika bridge, service road beyond Toklat Road Camp).
  - Close relocation area if necessary (Appendix H).
  - Open when the carcass has been consumed.



- Document all actions.
- 2) **Within 100 meters of backcountry trail or within 800 meters of park road and on a constricted, regular travel route:**
    - Close the area at access points and around carcass (Appendix H).
    - Patrol the area to see if the carcass has been consumed.
    - Open when the carcass has been consumed.
    - Document all actions.
  - 3) **Further than 800 meters off road and not within 100 meters of trail or common route:**
    - The Backcountry Subdistrict Ranger will request that staff issuing backcountry permits or contacting day hikers inform these parties of the location of the carcass.
    - Discontinue this process once the carcass has been consumed.
    - Document all actions.

**B. Bear on Carcass:**

- 1) In frontcountry, along road, view points, access points for travel routes, within 300 meters of developed site, Visitor Center, Science and Learning Center, Riley Creek Campground, and Headquarters:
  - Notification.
  - Inform other staff or Visitor Center staff if in area of VC.
  - Inform visitors or residents in the area.
  - Inform the Communications Center.
  - Close the area.
  - Patrol regularly to ensure people are not in the area.
  - Open when the carcass has been consumed and the bear(s) is out of the area.
  - Document all actions.
- 2) In the backcountry
  - Inform backcountry desk staff
  - Close area especially if it is frequented by backcountry users

- Patrol the area and open when the carcass has been consumed
- Document all actions.

## **7. Single Interaction, No Injury and No Food Obtained.**

- If necessary, escort people away from the bear without provoking further interactions.
- Conduct an initial investigation for the causes of the incident.
- Monitor the situation.
- Make appropriate notifications.
- Document all actions.

### **A. Interaction resulting from intentional or unintentional harassment:**

- Provide information concerning bear behavior to individuals involved to prevent future negative interactions.
- Consider written warnings or citations.
- No management action directed toward the bear(s).
- Consider a temporary closure (one-week maximum).
- Document all actions.

### **B. Interaction resulting from a surprise encounters, curious approach, dominance interaction, predatory response, or close range tolerance:**

- Provide information concerning bear behavior to individuals involved to prevent future negative interactions.
- No management action directed toward the bear(s).
- Consider a closure (one-week maximum).
- Document all actions.

### **C. Bear interest in anthropogenic food:**

- Attempt to mark the bear (i.e. paint ball, radio collar) for future positive identification.
- Initiate hazing or aversive conditioning.
- If aversive conditioning fails, consider relocation.

**D. Bear exhibiting threatening behavior:**

- Attempt to mark the bear (i.e. paint ball, radio collar) for future positive identification.
- Test.
- Attempt relocation.
- If relocation fails or is not a reasonable option, consider placement in a zoo or research facility or destruction.
- Document all actions.

**8. Bear exhibiting tolerant, conditioned or rewarded behavior. No injuries or food obtained.**

- Conduct a thorough review of all interactions. Review the causes of the bear's behavior and determine if the problems in the area are related to one animal.
- If the Wildlife Management Technicians, Sub-district Ranger and Wildlife Biologist feel a bear represents an unusual threat to visitor safety, close area.
- Initiate patrol procedure.
- Document all actions.

**A. If patrol procedure identifies bear attracted to human food or conditioned:**

- Attempt to mark the bear (i.e. paint ball, radio collar) for future positive identification.
- Initiate hazing or aversive conditioning.
- If aversive conditioning fails, consider relocation.
- If relocation fails or is not a reasonable option, consider placement in a zoo or research facility.

**B. If the bear demonstrates threatening behavior toward people:**

- Consider destruction

**C. If patrols do not find a bear demonstrating these behaviors, open the area after three patrols and/or two weeks.**

**9. Bear Obtains anthropogenic Food.**

**A. All Incidents:**

- Conduct an initial investigation to determine the type of incident.
- Make appropriate notifications. 's
- Begin initial response procedures.
- Consider written warnings or citations.
- Provide information concerning bears to individuals involved.
- Consider how food and garbage handling practices may have contributed to the incident when selecting management options.
- Document all actions.

**B. Backcountry:**

- Close the area.
- Clear the area and locate the bear(s).
- Attempt to mark the bear (radio collar, paint ball) for future positive identification.
- Initiate aversive conditioning.
- If the patrol is unsuccessful in finding the bear(s), open the area after five days.
- Document all actions.

**C. Frontcountry:**

- Correct any food or garbage handling problems.
- Identify the bear(s).
- Attempt to mark the bear (radio collar, paint ball) for future positive identification.
- If bear returns, initiate hazing or aversive conditioning.
- If aversive conditioning fails, consider translocation.
- If two translocations fail, consider placement in a zoo or research facility, or destruction.
- If the patrol is unsuccessful in finding the bear(s), open the area after five days.

Document all actions.